VACCINE ADVERSE EVENT REPORTING SYSTEM
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24-Hour Toll-Free Information Line **800-822-7967**
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VAERS DATA USE GUIDE

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1. Important Information About VAERS

The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) was created by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to receive reports about adverse events that may be associated with vaccines. No prescription drug or biological product, such as a vaccine, is completely free from side effects. Vaccines protect many people from dangerous illnesses, but vaccines, like drugs, can cause side effects, a small percentage of which may be serious. VAERS is used to continually monitor reports to determine whether any vaccine or vaccine lot has a higher than expected rate of events.

Doctors and other vaccine providers are encouraged to report adverse events, even if they are not certain that the vaccination was the cause. Since it is difficult to distinguish a coincidental event from one truly caused by a vaccine, the VAERS database will contain events of both types.

In addition, it is often the case that more than one vaccine was administered, making it difficult to know to which of the vaccines the event might be attributed. In analyzing individual reports, researchers examine the medical information about the event, and obtain more specific information from the reporters whenever necessary. Patterns of reporting associated with vaccines and vaccine lots are also analyzed.

About 85-90% of vaccine adverse event reports concern relatively minor events, such as fevers or redness and swelling at the injection site. The remaining reports (less than 15%) describe serious events, such as hospitalizations, life-threatening illnesses, or deaths. The reports of serious events are of greatest concern and receive the most careful scrutiny by VAERS staff.

VAERS researchers apply procedures and methods of analysis to help us closely monitor the safety of vaccines. When a concern arises, action is taken. We hope that this brief explanation of the factors associated with vaccines and adverse events will assist you in understanding the data you are viewing.

Requests for additional information should be addressed to:

Food and Drug Administration
Office of Shared Services
Division of Freedom of Information
Office of Public Information and Library Services
12420 Parklawn Drive ELEM-1029
Rockville, MD 20857

2. Brief Description of VAERS

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) established VAERS, which is co-administered by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), to accept all reports of suspected adverse events, in all age groups, after the administration of any U.S. licensed vaccine. On November 1, 1990 VAERS replaced CDC's Monitoring System for Adverse Events Following Immunization (MSAEFI) for public sector reporting and FDA's Spontaneous Reporting System for private sector and manufacturer reporting. The primary purpose for maintaining the database is to serve as an early warning or signaling system for adverse events not detected during pre-market testing. In addition, the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986 (NCVIA) requires health care providers and vaccine manufacturers to report to the DHHS specific adverse events following the administration of those vaccines outlined in the Act.

All reports are coded and entered into the VAERS database. The adverse events described in each report were coded utilizing the FDA's Coding Symbols for a Thesaurus of Adverse Reaction Terms (COSTART) from November 1990 until January 16 2007. On January 17 2007 the VAERS coding system was converted to an international coding system that is used worldwide. This system is called the Medical Dictionary for Regulatory Activities (MedDRA). The MedDRA coding system uses key words representing the medical condition(s) described in the case report and converts them to standardized codes. The MedDRA codes provided in the dataset are called the "Preferred Terms"; there are more than 17,000 Preferred Term codes in the MedDRA system. The MedDRA coding system is more detailed than the COSTART system, which is comprised of 5,817 codes. Therefore the MedDRA system is not only standardized for international use, it is also able to code medical terms in a more exacting manner than the COSTART system design. All the

COSTART codes that were used in the VAERS data prior to January 17, 2007 have been converted to MedDRA coding terms. The MedDRA coding system is updated semi-annually, and terms may be added, deleted or changed with each new release. VAERS reports are coded using the MedDRA version in effect at the time the codes are entered; therefore, different terms may be used to describe similar events in reports coded at different times.

If you desire more information about MedDRA, please visit the following web site: http://www.meddramsso.com/

3. VAERS Data Should be Interpreted with Caution

- VAERS data are from a passive surveillance system and represent unverified reports of health events that occur after vaccination. Such data are subject to limitations of under-reporting, simultaneous administration of multiple vaccine antigens, reporting bias, and lack of incidence rates in unvaccinated comparison groups.
- When reporting and evaluating data from VAERS, it is important to note that for any reported event, no cause and effect relationship has been established. The event may have been related to an underlying disease or condition, to medications being taken concurrently, or may have occurred by chance.
- A report often involves more than one vaccine and may involve more than one reported adverse event.
- In certain cases VAERS requests additional information from reporters, healthcare providers and other parties. The status, event description and medical codes associated with a report are subject to change upon receipt of such additional information.
- When multiple reports of a single case or event are received, only the first report received is included in the publicly accessible dataset. Subsequent reports may contain additional or conflicting data, and there is no assurance that the data provided in the public dataset is the most accurate or current available.
- A given report may meet more than one criterion for classification as "serious."
- Accumulations of events reported to a passive surveillance system do not allow incidence rate calculations due to the generally unknown extent of under-reporting as well as lack of information on the number of people being vaccinated.

Disclaimer: Please note that VAERS staff follow-up on all serious and other selected adverse event reports to obtain additional medical, laboratory, and/or autopsy records to help understand the concern raised. However, in general, coding terms in VAERS do not change based on the information received during the follow-up process. VAERS data should be used with caution as numbers and conditions do not reflect data collected during follow-up. Note that the inclusion of events in VAERS data does not infer causality.

4. Description of Data Files

VAERS data is accessible by two mechanisms: by downloading raw data in comma-separated value (CSV) files for import into a database, spreadsheet or text editing program, or by use of the CDC WONDER online search tool.

The downloadable VAERS public data set consists of three separate data files. These files are provided by calendar year beginning with the first VAERS reports reported in the latter part of 1990. The public data set is updated on a monthly basis. In the following tables, "Box" refers to the numbered items or "boxes" on the VAERS form. Comma-separated-value (CSV) files are industry-standard text files compatible with most of the major database or statistical analysis products on the market. Each data set is available for download in 2 formats: as three separate CSV files, or as a compressed Zip file that contains the three CSV files listed for the specific year.

CDC WONDER, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is an easy-to-use menu-driven system requiring no computer expertise or special software that provides access to a wide array of public health information. With CDC WONDER you can produce tables, maps, charts and data extracts showing the incidence of vaccine adverse events, and select specific event, vaccine and demographic criteria to produce cross-tabulated incidence measures. You can also limit and index your data by several variables. VAERS data is available on CDC WONDER at http://wonder.cdc.gov/vaers.html. Additional information about CDC WONDER is available at http://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/help/vaers.html .

For each section below, each row in a table refers to a separate field (or column) in the data. The "Header" provides the field name or column "header." "Type" describes the type of data contained in the data field. The information in parenthesis specifies the data format or number of digits or characters contained in the field. There are three data types:

1. NUM = numeric data
2. CHAR = text or "character" data
3. DATE = date fields in mm/dd/yy format

No data is provided that would allow identification of any individuals associated with these reports. Each field, each row, in the table pertains to information recorded in (or derived from) the various numbered sections of the VAERS-1 form except when otherwise specified.

4.1 VAERSDATA.CSV

The following table provides a detailed description of the data provided in each field of the VAERSDATA.CSV file. The first two fields in this table are the only fields of the dataset not derived from the VAERS-1 form.

Header	Type	Description of Contents
VAERS_ID	Num(6)	VAERS Identification Number
RECVDATE	Date	Date report was received
STATE	Char(2)	Box 1: State
AGE_YRS	Num(xxx.x)	Box 4: Age in Years
CAGE_YR	Num(xx)	Age of patient in years calculated by (vax_date-birthdate)*
CAGE_MO	Num(xx)	Age of patient in months calculated by (vax_date-birthdate).* The values for this variable range from 0 to <1.
SEX	Char(1)	Box 5: Sex
RPT_DATE	Date	Box 6: Date Form Completed
SYMPTOM_TEXT	Char(2048)	Box 7: Reported symptom text
DIED	Char(1)	Box 8a1: Died ('Y' - Yes)
DATEDIED	Date	Box 8a2: Date of Death
L_THREAT	Char(1)	Box 8b: Life-Threatening Illness ('Y' - Yes)
ER_VISIT	Char(1)	Box 8c: Emergency Room or Doctor Visit ('Y' - Yes)
HOSPITAL	Char(1)	Box 8d1: Hospitalized ('Y' - Yes)
HOSPDAYS	Num(3)	Box 8d2: Number of days Hospitalized
X_STAY	Char(1)	Box 8e: Prolonged Hospitalization ('Y' - Yes)
DISABLE	Char(1)	Box 8f: Disability ('Y' - Yes)
RECOVD	Char(1)	Box 9: Recovered ('Y' - Yes, 'N' - No, 'U' - Unknown)
VAX_DATE	Date	Box 10: Vaccination Date
ONSET_DATE	Date	Box 11: Adverse Event Onset Date
NUMDAYS	Num(5)	Number of days (Onset date - Vax. Date)
LAB_DATA	Char(750)	Box 12: Diagnostic laboratory data
V_ADMINBY	Char(3)	Box 15: Vaccines Administered at (PUB=Public, PVT=Private,OTH=Other, MIL=Military)
V_FUNDBY	Char(3)	Box 16: Vaccines purchased with (PUB=Public, PVT=Private, OTH=Other, MIL=Military) funds
OTHER_MEDS	Char(750)	Box 17: Other Medications
CUR_ILL	Char(500)	Box 18: Current Illnesses
HISTORY	Char(750)	Box 19: Pre-existing physician diagnosed allergies, birth defects, medical conditions
PRIOR_VAX	Char(256)	Box 21: Prior Vaccination Event information
SPLTTYPE	Char(25)	Box 24: Manufacturer Number

* The variables CAGE_YR and CAGE_MO work in conjunction to specify the calculated age of a person. For example, if CAGE_YR=1 and CAGE_MO=.5 then the age of the individual is 1.5 years or 1 year 6 months.

4.2 VAERSVAX.CSV

The fields described in this table provide the remaining vaccine information (e.g., vaccine name, manufacturer, lot number, route, site, and number of previous doses administered), for each of the vaccines listed in Box 13 of the VAERS form. There is a matching record in this file with the VAERSDATA file identified by VAERS_ID.

Header	Type	Description of Contents
VAERS_ID	Num(6)	VAERS Identification Number
VAX_TYPE	Char(15)	Administered Vaccine Type
VAX_MANU	Char(16)	Vaccine Manufacturer
VAX_LOT	Char(15)	Manufacturer's Vaccine Lot
VAX_DOSE	Char(2)	Number of previous doses administered
VAX_ROUTE	Char(2)	Vaccination Route
VAX_SITE	Char(2)	Vaccination Site
VAX_NAME	Char(50)	Vaccination Name

4.3 VAERSSYMPTOMS.CSV

The fields described in this table provide the adverse event coded terms utilizing the MedDRA dictionary. Coders will search for specific terms in boxes 7 and 12 and code them to a searchable and consistent MedDRA term. There can be an unlimited amount of coded terms for a given event. Each .csv will contain up to 5 MedDRA terms per VAERS ID. For each of the VAERS_ID's listed in the VAERSDATA.CSV table, there is a matching record in this file, identified by VAERS_ID.

Header	Type	Description of Contents
VAERS_ID	Num(6)	VAERS Identification Number
SYMPTOM1	Char(50)	Adverse Event MedDRA Term 1
SYMPTOMVERSION1	Num(2.1)	MedDRA dictionary version number 1
SYMPTOM2	Char(50)	Adverse Event MedDRA Term 1
SYMPTOMVERSION2	Num(2.1)	MedDRA dictionary version number 2
SYMPTOM3	Char(50)	Adverse Event MedDRA Term 3
SYMPTOMVERSION3	Num(2.1)	MedDRA dictionary version number 3
SYMPTOM4	Char(50)	Adverse Event MedDRA Term 4
SYMPTOMVERSION4	Num(2.1)	MedDRA dictionary version number 4
SYMPTOM5	Char(50)	Adverse Event MedDRA Term 5
SYMPTOMVERSION5	Num(2.1)	MedDRA dictionary version number 5

5. Definitions of Terms Used in Data Files

The following definitions pertain to the fields found in the three separate data files.

5.1 VAERSDATA.CSV

The following definitions pertain to the fields found in the VAERSDATA.CSV file described in section 4.1 above.

1) VAERS Identification Number (VAERS_ID): A sequentially assigned number used for identification purposes. It serves as a link between the three data files.

2) Receive Date (RECVDATE): The date the VAERS form information was received to our processing center.

3) State (STATE): The two-letter US Postal Service abbreviation for the home state of the vaccinee as noted in Box 1 on the VAERS form. Please note that all foreign reports are contained in a separate data file.

4) Age in Years (AGE_YRS): The recorded vaccine recipient's age, in years, from Box 4 of the VAERS form.

5) Age in Years(CAGE_YR): Age of patient in years calculated by (vax_date-birthdate)

6) Age in Months(CAGE_MO): Age of patient in months calculated by (vax_date-birthdate)

7) Sex (SEX): Sex of the vaccine recipient from Box 5 of the VAERS form (M = Male, F = Female, Unknown = Blank).

8) Date Form Completed (RPT_DATE): Date the VAERS forms was completed by the reporter, from Box 6 on the VAERS form.

9) Reported Symptom Text (SYMPTOM_TEXT): This is the symptom text recorded in Box 7. MedDRA Terms are derived from this text and placed in the VAERSSYMPTOMS file.

10) Patient Outcomes: The reporter's assessment of the vaccine recipient outcome is recorded in Box 8 on the VAERS form. Selections checked in Box 8 determine whether a report is considered to be a non-serious report, a serious report, or a death report.

- **Died (DIED):** If the vaccine recipient died, a "Y" is placed in Box 8a1. Otherwise the field will be blank
- **Date of Death: (DATEDIED):** If the reporter checked that the vaccine recipient died, there is space in Box 8a2 to record the date of death. Otherwise the field will be blank.
- **Life Threatening (L_THREAT):** If the vaccine recipient had a life-threatening event associated with the vaccination, a "Y" is placed in Box 8b. Otherwise the field will be blank
- **Emergency Room (ER_VISIT):** If the vaccine recipient required an emergency room or doctor visit, a "Y" is placed in Box 8c. Otherwise the field will be blank. If this is the only Box 8 option checked, the report is not considered serious.

- **Hospitalized (HOSPITAL):** If the vaccine recipient was hospitalized as a result of the vaccination, a "Y" is placed in Box 8d1. Otherwise the field will be blank
- **Days Hospitalized (HOSPDAYS):** If the reporter checked that the vaccine recipient was hospitalized, space is provided in Box 8d2 to record the number of days hospitalized. Otherwise the field will be blank.
- **Prolonged Hospitalization (X_STAY):** If a patient's hospitalization is prolonged as a result of the adverse event associated with the vaccination, a "Y" will be placed in Box 8e. Otherwise the field will be blank.
- **Disability (DISABLE):** If the vaccine recipient was disabled as a result of the vaccination, a "Y" is placed in Box 8f. Otherwise the field will be blank

11) Recovered (RECOVD): A "Y" is placed in the field if the reporter checked on Box 9 of the VAERS form that the vaccine recipient recovered from the adverse event. "N" indicated that the vaccine has not recovered from the adverse event. "U" or blank indicates that the vaccine recipient's recovery status is unknown.

12) Vaccination Date (VAX_DATE): The date of vaccination as recorded in Box 10 of the VAERS form.

13) Onset Date (ONSET_DATE): The date of the onset of adverse event symptoms associated with the vaccination as recorded in Box 11 of the VAERS form.

14) Onset Interval (NUMDAYS): The calculated interval (in days) from the vaccination date to the onset date.

15) Relevant Diagnostic Tests/Laboratory Data (LAB_DATA): This text field contains narrative about any relevant diagnostic tests or laboratory results as recorded in Box 12 on the VAERS form.

16) Vaccine Administered at (V_ADMINBY): The reporter may note in Box 15 the type of facility administering the vaccine (PUB=Public, PVT=Private, MIL=Military; OTH Other/unknown)

17) Vaccine Purchased with (V_FUNDBY): The reporter may note in Box 16 on the VAERS form which type of funds were used to purchase the vaccines administered in Box 13 (PUB=Public, PVT=Private, MIL=Military; OTH Other/unknown).

18) Other Medications (OTHER_MEDS): This text field contains narrative about any prescription or non-prescription drugs the vaccine recipient was taking at the time of vaccination as recorded in Box 17 of the VAERS form.

19) Current Illnesses (CUR_ILL): This text field contains narrative about any illnesses at the time of the vaccination as noted in Box 18 of the VAERS form.

20) Pre-existing Conditions (HISTORY): This text field contains narrative about any pre-existing physician-diagnosed allergies, birth defects, medical condition that existed at the time of vaccination as noted in Box 19 of the VAERS form.

21) Prior Vaccination Event Information (PRIOR_VAX): This field provides prior vaccination event information recorded in Box 21 on the VAERS form.

22) Manufacturer Number (SPLTTYPE): Manufacturer number or Immunization Project number from Box 24.

5.2 VAERSVAX.CSV

The following definitions pertain to the fields found in the VAERSVAX.CSV file described in section 4.2 above.

1) VAERS Identification Number (VAERS_ID): A sequentially assigned number used for identification purposes. It serves as a link between the three data files.

2) Vaccine Type (VAX_TYPE): The data list the vaccines group name by code. Similar vaccines are grouped together (e.g., FLU, DTAP).

Vaccine Code	Vaccine Type
6VAX-F	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND ACELLULAR PERTUSSIS ABSORBED + INACTIVATED POLIOVIRUS + HEPATITIS B + HAEMOPHILUS B CONJUGATE VACCINE
ADEN	ADENOVIRUS VACCINE LIVE ORAL TYPE 7
ANTH	ANTHRAX VACCINE
BCG	BACILLUS CALMETTE-GUERIN VACCINE
CEE	CENTRAL EUROPEAN ENCEPHALITIS
CHOL	CHOLERA VACCINE
DPIPV	DIPHTHERIA,PERTUSSIS + INACTIVATED POLIO VIRUS
DPP	DIPHTHERIA/PERTUSSIS/POLIO (ORAL [LIVE OR INACTIVATED NOT NOTED])
DT	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS, PEDIATRIC
DTAP	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND ACELLULAR PERTUSSIS VACCINE
DTAPH	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND ACELLULAR PERTUSSIS VACCINE + HAEMOPHILUS B CONJUGATE VACCINE
DTAPHEPBIP	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND ACELLULAR PERTUSSIS VACCINE + HEPATITIS B + INACTIVATED POLIOVIRUS VACCINE
DTAPIPV	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND ACELLULAR PERTUSSIS VACCINE + INACTIVATED POLIOVIRUS VACCINE
DTAPIPVHIb	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND ACELLULAR PERTUSSIS VACCINE + INACTIVATED POLIOVIRUS VACCINE + HAEMOPHILUS B CONJUGATE VACCINE
DTIPV	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS, PEDIATRIC + INACTIVATED POLIOVIRUS VACCINE

DTOX	DIPHTHERIA TOXOID
DTP	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND PERTUSSIS VACCINE
DTPHEP	DIPHTHERIA,TETANUS, PERTUSSIS + HEPATITIS B
DTPHIB	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND PERTUSSIS VACCINE + HAEMOPHILUS B CONJUGATE VACCINE
DTPPHIB	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND PERTUSSIS VACCINE + INACTIVATED POLIOVIRUS VACCINE + HAEMOPHILUS B CONJUGATE VACCINE (TETANUS TOXOID CONJUGATE)
DTPIHI	DIPHTHERIA/TETANUS/WHOLE PERTUSSIS+INACTIVATED POLIO VIRUS+HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZA B
DTPIPV	DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS AND PERTUSSIS VACCINE + INACTIVATED POLIOVIRUS VACCINE
FLU	INFLUENZA VIRUS VACCINE
FLU(HD)	INFLUENZA VIRUS VACCINE HIGH DOSE
FLU(H1N1)	INFLUENZA(H1N1)MONOVALENT
FLUN	INFLUENZA VIRUS VACCINE (NASAL SPRAY)
FLUN(H1N1)	INFLUENZA(H1N1)MONOVALENT (NASAL SPRAY)
HBHEPB	HAEMOPHILUS B CONGUGATE VACCINE + HEPATITIS B
HBPV	HAEMOPHILUS B POLYSACCHARIDE VACCINE
HEP	HEPATITIS B VIRUS VACCINE
HEPA	HEPATITIS A
HEPAB	HEPATITIS A + HEPATITIS B
HIBV	HAEMOPHILUS B CONJUGATE VACCINE
HPV	HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS
HPV2	HUMAN PAPILLOVAVIRUS BIVALENT
HPV4	HUMAN PAPILLOVAVIRUS QUADRIVALENT
H5N1	PANDEMIC FLU VACCINE
IPV	POLIOVIRUS VACCINE INACTIVATED
JEV	JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS VACCINE, INACTIVATED
JEV1	JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS VACCINE, INACTIVATED, ADSORBED
LYME	LYME DISEASE VACCINE
MEA	MEASLES
MEN	MENINGOCOCCAL POLYSACCHARIDE VACCINE
MER	MEASLES AND RUBELLA VIRUS VACCINE, LIVE
MM	MEASLES AND MUMPS VIRUS VACCINE, LIVE
MMR	MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA VIRUS VACCINE, LIVE
MMRV	MEASLES, MUMPS, ROUBELLA AND VARICELLA VACCINE LIVE
MNC	MENINGOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINE
MNQ	MENINGOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINE
MU	MUMPS VIRUS VACCINE, LIVE
MUR	MUMPS AND RUBELLA VIRUS VACCINE, LIVE
OPV	POLIOVIRUS VACCINE TRIVALENT, LIVE, ORAL
PER	PERTUSSIS VACCINE
PLAGUE	PLAGUE VACCINE

PNC	PNEUMOCOCCAL 7-VALENT CONJUGATE VACCINE
PNC13	PNEUMOCOCCAL 13-VALENT CONJUGATE VACCINE
PPV	PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINE, POLYVALENT
RAB	RABIES VIRUS VACCINE
ROT	ROTAVIRUS VACCINE
ROTHB5	ROTAVIRUS VACCINE
ROTH1	ROTAVIRUS VACCINE
RUB	RUBELLA
RV	ROTAVIRUS
SMALL	SMALLPOX VACCINE
SSEV	SPRING/SUMMER ENCEPHALITIS VACCINE
TBE	TICK-BORNE ENCEPHALITIS VACCINE
TD	TETANUS AND DIPHTHERIA TOXOIDS, ADULT
TDAP	TETANUS TOXOID, REDUCED DIPHTHERIA TOXOID AND ACELLULAR PERTUSSIS VACCINE, ADSORBED
TTOX	TETANUS TOXOID
TYP	TYPHOID VACCINE
UNK	UNKNOWN VACCINE TYPE
VARCEL	VARIVAX-VARICELLA VIRUS LIVE
VARZOS	VARICELLA-ZOSTER VACCINE
YF	YELLOW FEVER VACCINE

3) Vaccine Manufacturer (VAX_MANU): This field identifies the manufacturer of the each of the vaccines listed Box 13 of the VAERS form.

4) Manufacturers Vaccine Lot (VAX_LOT): This field identified the lot number of the vaccines listed in Box 13 of the VAERS form.

5) Vaccine Dose (VAX_DOSE): This field identifies the vaccine dose recorded in Box 13 of the VAERS form.

6) Vaccination Route (VAX_ROUTE): This field identifies the vaccine route of administration as noted in Box 13 of the VAERS form.

7) Vaccination Site (VAX_SITE): This field identified the anatomic site where the vaccination was administered as noted on Box 13 of the VAERS form.

8) Vaccine Name (VAX_NAME): This field provides the brand name of the vaccine administered in Box 13 of the VAERS form.

5.3 VAERSSYMPTOMS.CSV

The following definitions pertain to the fields found in the VAERSSYMPTOMS.CSV file described in section 4.3 above.

1) VAERS Identification Number (VAERS_ID): A sequentially assigned number used for identification purposes. It serves as a link between the three data files.

2) MedDRA Term (SYMPTOM1-5): The data in these fields are equivalent to the PT TERM from the MedDRA codebook. MedDRA terms are extracted from Box 7 and Box 12 narrative text. Duplicates may appear in data

3) MedDRA Term Version (SYMPTOMVERSION1-5): Version of MedDRA dictionary from which the MedDRA term was first created.

6. List of Commonly Used Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are commonly used in the VAERSDATA.CSV file.

Abbreviation	Explanation
a/	Before
abd	Abdomen
abn	abnormal (i.e., abn behavior, abn lab values)
addl	Additional
adm.	admitted, admission
ADR	adverse drug reaction
ADL	activities of daily living
AE	Adverse Event
afeb	Afebrile
AKA	also known as
alk phos	alkaline phosphatase
allerg	allergy, allergic
ALT	serum glutamic pyruvic transaminase (also SGPT)
AMA	American Medical Association
amb	ambulance, ambulate
amt	Amount
ANA	antinuclear antibody
ANAM	acute motor axonal neuropathy
APAP	Acetaminophen
approx	Approximately
appt	Appointment
ASA	Aspirin
assoc	Associated
AST	serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase (also SGOT)
ATB	Antibiotics
ax	axillary (temperature)
baso	Basophils
BC	blood culture
BID	twice daily
bilat	Bilateral
bili	Bilirubin
bm	bowel movement
BOM	bilateral otitis media
BP	blood pressure

BPM or bpm	beats per minute
BPM or bpm	beats per minute
Bx	biopsy, biopsies, biopsied
Ca	calcium
CA	cancer
CBC	complete blood count
cc	chief complaint
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CHD	congenital heart disease
CHF	congestive heart failure
CHN	community health nurse
chr	chronic
cm	centimeter
CNS	central nervous system
c/o	complained of
COD	cause of death
cont	continued
convuls	convulsion
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
CPK	creatinine phosphokinase
CPR	cardiopulmonary resuscitation
C&S	culture & sensitivity
CSF	cerebrospinal fluid
CT/CAT	computerized axial tomography (i.e., CAT scan)
ctr	center
CXR	chest X?ray
D	diarrhea
d/c	discontinued
dec	decreased, diminished
delt	deltoid
devel	developed
diam	diameter
diff	differential blood count
disch	discharge
DO	Doctor of Osteopathy
DPH	diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
DT	diphtheria tetanus
DTox	diphtheria toxoid
dtr	deep tendon reflexes
Dx	diagnosis
ECG/EKG	electrocardiogram
EEG	electroencephalogram
elev	elevate or elevated
EMT	emergency medical technician
eos	eosinophils
epi	epinephrine

ER	emergency room
esp	especially
ESR	erythrocyte sedimentation rate
eval	evaluation
exam	examination
exp	experienced
fam	family
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
feb	febrile
FH	family history
fr	from
FTR	father
f/u	follow up
fx	fracture
GBS	Guillain Barre Syndrome
gen	general
GI	gastrointestinal
gm	gram
GR-FR	grandfather
GR-MO	grandmother
gtt	drop(s)
h/a	headache
HBP	high blood pressure
hct	hematocrit
HEENT	head, eyes, ears, nose, and throat
hep	hepatitis
hgb	hemoglobin
hlth	health
HLV	herpes-like virus
h/o	history of
hosp	hospital
hr	hour, hours
HTN	hypertension
husb	husband
hx	history
ICU	intensive care unit
ID	identification, identified
Ig	immunoglobulin
IgG	immunoglobulin G
IM	intramuscular
immed	immediately
immun	immunization
imp	improved
inc	increase
inflam.	inflammation
infect	infection

IPV	injection
intermit	intermittent
IPV	inactivated poliovirus vaccine
ITP	idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura.
IV	intravenous
K	potassium
kg	kilogram
L	left or liter
lab	laboratory
lb	pound, pounds
LDH	lactic dehydrogenase
LMP	last menstrual period
LOC	level of consciousness or loss of consciousness
LP	lumbar puncture
LPN/LVN	Licensed practical or vocational nurse
lt	left
LT	Left Thigh
LUA	left upper arm
lymphs	lymphocytes
lytes	electrolytes (Na, K, Cl, etc)
mbr	member (of family)
mcg	microgram
MD	doctor, medical doctor
med(s)	medication(s)
men	meningitis
MFR	manufacturer
mg	milligram
mgm	alternative abbreviation for milligram
min(s)	minute(s)
ml	milliliter
mm	millimeter
MMR	measles, mumps, rubella vaccine (or individual components of M, M, or R)
MN	midnight
mod	moderate
mon	month, months
mono	monocytes, mononucleosis
MTR	mother
n/a	not applicable, not available
neg	negative
neuro	neurologic
NKA	no known allergies
NKDA	no known drug allergies
nl	normal
#	number
noc	night

np	nurse practicioner
npo	nothing by mouth (nil per os)
NSAID(s)	non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug(s)
N & V	nausea and vomiting
N,V, D	nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
O2	oxygen
ofc	office
Om	otitis media
OTC	over the counter (medication)
oth	other
oz	ounce, ounces
P	pulse
p/	after
PA	physician's assistant
PC/TC	phone call or telephone call
PCN	Penicillin
PDD	Pervasive Developmental Delay
PE	physical exam
ped	pediatrician
peds	pediatrics
PERRL	pupils equal, round, reactive to light
PERRLA	pupils equal, round, reactive to light and accommodation
PET	positron-emission tomography
pH	hydrogen ion concentration (acidity/alkalinity)
pharm.	pharmacy
PharmD	doctor of pharmacy
phenobarb	phenobarbital
PHN	public health nurse
PMD	private medical doctor
PN	practical nurse
PNP	pediatric nurse practitioner
PO	by mouth
pos	positive
poss	possible
PPD	purified protein derivative
pr	per rectum
pred	prednisone
prev	previous
PRN	as needed
pt(s)	patient, patients
PT	prothrombin. time
PTT	partial thromboplastin time
PVT	private
q	every
QID	four times a day
qtr	quarter

R	respiration or right
RBC	red blood cell
recv	received, receives, receive
rehab	rehabilitation
resp	respiratory
RIG	rabies immune globulin
RN	registered nurse
r/o	rule out
ROM	range of motion
rpt	report or reported
rt	right
RT	Right Thigh
R/T	related to
RTC	return to clinic
RUA	right upper arm
rx	therapy; treatment; medication (i.e., pt's rx = tylenol)
rxn	reaction, reactions
SC	subcutaneous
sec	second, seconds
sed	rate sedimentation rate
SG	specific gravity
SGOT	serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase (also AST)
SGPT	serum glutamic pyravic transaminase (also ALT)
SHC	state health coordinator
sib	sibling, siblings
SIDS	sudden infant death syndrome
sl	slight, slightly
SMA	sequential multiple analyzer (series of blood chemistries)
SOB	shortness of breath
S & S	signs & symptoms
s/sx	signs & symptoms
stat	immediately
std	standard
Sx	symptom, symptoms, sign, signs
synd	syndrome
sz	seizure, seized, seizures
T	temperature (Fahrenheit)
tab	tablet, tablets
TB	tuberculosis
tbsp	tablespoon, tablespoons
TC/PC	telephone call or phone call
TD	adult tetanus and diphtheria toxoid
temp	temperature
TID	three times a day
TOPV	trivalent oral polio vaccine
tox	toxic, toxoid, toxicology (as in toxicology screen)

TPN	total parenteral nutrition
TPR	temperature, pulse, respiration
trach	tracheostomy
tsp	teaspoon, teaspoons
Ttox	tetanus toxoid
TTP	thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura
tx	treatment, treatments, treated
u	units, unit
ur	urine
UA	urinalysis
unk	unknown
URI	upper respiratory infection
USP	United States Pharmacopeia (standard)
UTI	urinary tract infection
V	vomiting
vax	vaccine, vaccines
v fib	ventricular fibrillation
VS	vital signs (temperature, pulse, resp, blood pressure)
VSS	vital signs stable
v tach	ventricular tachycardia
VZIG	varicella zoster immune globulin
w/	with
w/o	without
w/u	work up
WBC	white blood cell
wk	week, weeks
WNL	within normal limits
wt	weight
x/	except
yr	year, years
@	at
&	and
->	causes to , resulting in, showed, to the right, progressing toward
<-	resulting from, to the left
>	greater than

7. Downloadable VAERS Data Sets Disclaimer

Please note that VAERS staff follow-up on all serious and other selected adverse event reports to obtain additional medical, laboratory, and/or autopsy records to help understand the concern raised. However, in general coding terms in VAERS do not change based on the information received during the follow-up process. VAERS data should be used with caution as numbers and conditions do not reflect data collected during follow-up. Note that the inclusion of events in VAERS data does not infer causality.